

The Revitalization of Central Maine: Updated Recompete Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: \$49.4 million in EDA funding will leverage \$10,223,900 in partner commitments and \$60.5 million in developer and business investment, catalyzing the region's ability to equitably address prime age employment, per capita wages, and long-term economic development.

The coalition is thrilled to champion the Revitalization of Central Maine Recompete Plan that pairs local-first strategies with strong leadership to implement new and innovative projects, while adding much-needed, on-the-ground capacity to programs that have proven and successful track records for addressing need-based challenges in central Maine. Specifically, we're focused on creating new, good jobs and connecting people to new & existing good jobs to reduce the PAEG via:

- Downtown revitalization and rural economic development strategies
- Civic and innovation infrastructure development
- A regional hub-and-spoke innovation model that includes entrepreneurial technical assistance, incubation, and acceleration programs
- Job readiness opportunities via apprenticeship programs, career pathways, and training
- Workforce program alignment and enhanced employer training and connectivity to resources
- Bolstered public health and basic need navigation to connect people with resources to get back into the workforce
- Regional transportation planning and a new data-driven pilot program
- Combating social isolation/loneliness—a public health epidemic and unemployment factor—through social infrastructure and community programming

Unchanged from Phase 1, the specific area to be served includes the Skowhegan/Waterville Route 201 corridor that encompasses the towns of Skowhegan and Fairfield (in LLM Commuting Zone 269 with a PAEG of 4.85), as well as the city of Waterville (a Local Community with a PAEG of 6). The Skowhegan/Waterville region is centrally located in the state of Maine. The loss of manufacturing jobs, prolific generational poverty, and below-average median earnings—Skowhegan: \$36,781 (men) \$21,963 (women) and Waterville: \$35,051 (men) and \$25,483 (women) according to DataUS.io—paired with rising costs of housing, childcare, groceries, and other basic needs, continue to hold our region back.

Our non-traditional, asset- and community-based approach to workforce development addresses our most pressing regional challenges while building on our core strengths. It takes an equitable, all-voices-in approach that incorporates worker voice and employer needs while weaving together data-informed decisions, ultra-local capacity building, and bolstered support of successful programs to pilot new ideas and solutions to achieve our goals. We've already begun to break down silos, increase communication and cross-sector collaboration, and make changes to the way things have always been done—and we're just getting started.

STRATEGY & VISION: Through the implementation of The Revitalization of Central Maine Recompete Plan, we will grow and strengthen our regional economy; catalyze economic development, adding new businesses and good jobs; reduce the PAEG and prepare our workforce for meaningful employment; and build regional resiliency and prosperity, improving the quality of life for all residents.

Strategic Approach: There is no one magic bullet that will propel our region into prosperity. Together, the following interventions, strategies, and projects make up The Revitalization of Central Maine Recompete Plan.

Intervention: Create New, Good Jobs via Innovation and Infrastructure Development

According to Main Street America’s Chief Program Officer Matt Wagner, “there is an intersectionality between Main Streets and innovation-driven ecosystems. Specifically, place is both a focal point of hyperlocal small business ecosystems, and it also intersects with high-tech manufacturing sector ecosystems that are focused on unique forms of capital, talent agglomeration, and sector infrastructure. There are two primary macro drivers: 1. Economic development has become highly dependent on human capital. Given mobility within high-propensity ecosystems, human capital is seeking quality of place as they have more choices where to live and work. 2. In the Age of Dispersion in which nearly anything can be done online, there is a pendulum swing reaction in which people and entrepreneurs are demonstrating a natural yearning for community engagement and interaction.”

Through strategic public-private partnerships, a regional hub-and-spoke entrepreneurial ecosystem model, innovation and civic infrastructure investments, Main Street revitalization, placemaking, and resource alignment, we’ll overcome post-mill era challenges and grow central Maine’s economy, adding new, good jobs.

Strategy 1: Strengthen the Regional Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Invest in regional accelerator and incubator programs that underscore emerging regional strengths—tech and the digital economy, precision and food manufacturing—while providing low-barrier-to-entry opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs, supporting startups and founders, and driving job creation.

Strategy 2: Invest in Civic and Innovation Infrastructure

Focus on place as a driver for innovation and community engagement. Stimulate downtown investment and economic growth via sustainable development of public spaces that serve as innovation hubs, third spaces, and civic infrastructure, connecting our commercial business districts to green space, parks, and the Kennebec River that intersects our city/town centers.

Intervention: Connect People to New & Existing Good Jobs via Local Navigation

According to predictions in Maine’s 10-year Economic Development Strategy, the state will need 60-65% of its workers to have credentials by 2025. With regional efforts underway to grow existing businesses and attract new jobs, in addition to current and future workforce needs of regional employers—including New Balance’s plan to add 200 new jobs within the next year—it’s critical that we re-engage our unemployed/underemployed and connect them to resources that will help them attain gainful employment.

Recent meetings with coalition members and resource agencies, listening sessions with local librarians, service providers who regularly work with members of the PAEG helped to further refine Recompete Plan Implementation Strategies. While anecdotal data indicated that the region would benefit from additional workforce and public health resources, we quickly learned that there are many resources—however, accessing those resources is the real challenge. Resource agencies are more than willing to assist, but lack capacity to deploy services at the local level. Therefore, our focus for connecting members of the PAEG to good jobs is to increase local capacity of successful programs and add navigators who can provide on-the-ground support and connectivity to resources

for both employers and residents. For transportation, a workforce resource that IS severely lacking, we're proposing a planning and pilot project that will lay the foundation for implementation of long-term transportation solutions.

Strategy 3: Prioritize Job Readiness via Training, Apprenticeship Programs, and Career Pathways

Tap into successful, statewide and regional workforce and job readiness programs by adding Adult Ed Career Navigators, a Community Coordinator for Apprenticeships, and a Career Pathways Coordinator to bolster local capacity to deploy training, develop employer-driven apprenticeship programs and career pathways, and to connect employers and members of the PAEG to these job-readiness resources. Utilize incubator and accelerator programs to offer employer-requested training, including digital literacy and culinary arts.

Strategy 4: Align Workforce Programs & Connect Employers to Resources & Training

Grow the existing Workforce Practitioners group to include additional regional partners and increase collaboration, communication, and alignment of workforce development organizations, resource providers, and employers. Develop a Regional Navigator Network, adding Workforce Navigators at the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce and Skowhegan Regional Chamber of Commerce and Recovery Friendly Advisors at Somerset Public Health to build capacity and help connect employers to workforce resources.

Strategy 5: Expand Access to Public Health Resources

Increase capacity at Somerset Public Health and Kennebec Valley Community Action Program to expand holistic individual and family support services, using the Family Centered Coaching Model. Add Resource Navigators to assist more low-income individuals and families in recovery and/or facing personal life challenges, connecting them to support and community-based services, including job-readiness programs. Enhance basic need support and family and neighborhood programming in the service area with the addition of a Community Educator and Neighborhood Engagement Specialist.

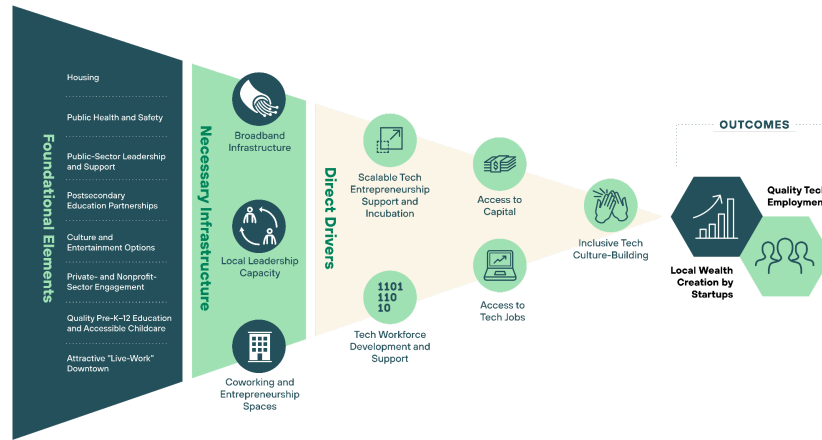
Strategy 6: Prioritize Community Connectedness

Add capacity at several community-based organizations to plan and execute programs, outdoor activities, and events to bring people together at the neighborhood level and across socioeconomic and cultural divides, utilizing civic infrastructure and third spaces in the hearts of our communities. Community connectedness and civic engagement opportunities will help combat social isolation, substance use, and loneliness—all serious public health challenges that are keeping people from the workforce—while also encouraging bridging and socioeconomic mixing that often lead to upward economic mobility.

Strategy 7: Expand Public Transportation Options

Deploy a regional, collaborative approach to expand public transportation in the region. Convene a Transportation Working Group, hire a Transportation Planner, gather mobility data, and execute a transit pilot within the greater central Maine region to reduce barriers to employment.

The Revitalization of Central Maine Recompete Plan strategies reflect a comprehensive approach to community economic development, and our proposed projects touch nearly every facet of the framework from the Center on Rural Innovation (CORI) below.



The Revitalization of Central Maine: Component Projects

WaterWorks Innovation Hub: Building Rural Ecosystems and Downtown Revitalization	
Lead: Central Maine Growth Council	Requested: \$11.8 million
Related Projects: Dirigo Launch, Commercial Kitchen Incubator, MSS Revitalization Admin, Civic Infrastructure, Regional Workforce Development	Associated Strategies: Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Prioritize Job Readiness, Expand Access to Public Health Resources, Invest in Civic Infrastructure & Prioritize Connectedness
<p>CMGC's Waterworks Innovation Hub construction project will catalyze development, as well as stimulate area investments and align critical regional organizations with shared missions around common initiatives under one roof with ample community gathering space. Beyond physical construction, this initiative represents a transformative endeavor to address multifaceted challenges while capitalizing on emerging opportunities in the digital economy including; coworking and innovation spaces, the Dirigo Labs Business Accelerator program, incubation services, technical assistance hubs, classrooms, office space, retail stalls for new businesses, and provisions tailored for low-to-moderate-income (LMI) individuals, and business who identify as BIPOC or Women-owned.</p>	

Dirigo Launch: Powering Rural Economies Through Startups & Innovation Ecosystems	
Lead: Central Maine Growth Council	Requested: \$5.27 million
Related Projects: WaterWorks Innovation Hub, Commercial Kitchen Incubator, MSS Revitalization Admin, Civic Infrastructure, Regional Workforce Development	Associated Strategies: Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Prioritize Job Readiness, Expand Access to Public Health Resources, Invest in Civic Infrastructure & Prioritize Connectedness
<p>Through a data-driven public-private economic development partnership aimed at bolstering the vitality of Main Streets and regional economies, while harnessing the resources of local academic institutions and the innovative environment provided by Bricks Coworking & Innovation Space, CMGC's rural innovation hub will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand DL startup accelerator and rural business technical assistance services, supporting \$25M in sales ● Cultivate a 250-mentor network with over 800 mentor sessions ● Diversify investment capital and deal flow that raise \$15M plus an additional \$12M in non dilutive grant funding ● Convene public-private and philanthropic assets to boost tech and rural pipeline apprenticeship programs filling 168 jobs 	

Commercial Kitchen Incubator	
Lead: Main Street Skowhegan	Requested: \$2.5 million
Related Projects: WaterWorks Innovation Hub, Dirigo Launch, MSS Revitalization Admin, Civic Infrastructure, Regional Workforce Development	Associated Strategies: Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Prioritize Job Readiness, Expand Access to Public Health Resources, Invest in Civic Infrastructure & Prioritize Connectedness
Main Street Skowhegan is leading the development of The Kitchen at 185, a project that will drive food innovation in the central Maine region. Components include a shared-use commercial kitchen for food entrepreneurs, service programming for incubation, community programming for residents and visitors, co-packing to add value to surplus farm products, and job training to support career pathways in the food industry.	

Main Street Skowhegan Revitalization Admin	
Lead: Main Street Skowhegan	Requested: \$7.23 million
Related Projects: WaterWorks Innovation Hub, Dirigo Launch, Commercial Kitchen Incubator, Civic Infrastructure, Regional Workforce Development, Public Health	Associated Strategies: Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Prioritize Job Readiness, Expand Access to Public Health Resources, Invest in Civic Infrastructure & Prioritize Connectedness
Coalition lead, Main Street Skowhegan (MSS) is focused on infrastructure development, supporting and attracting Main Street businesses, and implementing community programming. Our work spans the full spectrum of the Revitalization of Central Maine Recompete Plan, and we are thrilled to work with our many partners to champion this effort to reduce the PAEG and build regional resiliency. This component project captures five strategic and specific non-construction activities for coalition lead/project lead MSS that complement several other component projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Operation of the new commercial kitchen incubator, including staff and supplies ● Rural pilot program with national initiative, Reimagining the Civic Commons, to design & program civic spaces ● Increased capacity to plan and execute free programs and activities for underserved families, utilizing the newly constructed civic infrastructure ● Increased capacity to manage Outdoor Recreation Career Pathways ● Increased capacity to serve as coalition and multiple project lead 	

Civic Infrastructure	
Lead: Main Street Skowhegan & Town of Skowhegan	Requested: \$9.4 million
Related Projects: Commercial Kitchen Incubator, MSS Revitalization Admin, Regional Workforce Development, Public Health	Associated Strategies: Prioritize Job Readiness, Expand Access to Public Health Resources, Invest in Civic Infrastructure & Prioritize Connectedness
Co-applicants Main Street Skowhegan (MSS) and the Town of Skowhegan are requesting a \$9.4 million EDA investment to fund Component Project: Civic Infrastructure, a riverfront development construction project and a primary focus of Skowhegan’s revitalization efforts. MSS will match this with \$1 million in other grant funding to construct a 1000-foot promenade, featuring gorge overlooks and water access, along the river in Skowhegan’s downtown. The project will benefit businesses, residents, and visitors by developing civic infrastructure that will support free and inclusive community activities as well as major events; provide space for community gathering, connecting, and recreating; attract consumers to explore and spend time and money at Main Street businesses, and spur investment in Skowhegan’s historic downtown.	

Regional Workforce Development	
Lead: Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce	Requested: \$4.5 million
Related Projects: WaterWorks Innovation Hub, Dirigo Launch, Commercial Kitchen Incubator, MSS Revitalization Admin, Civic Infrastructure, Public Health, Transportation	Associated Strategies: Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Prioritize Employee Job Readiness, Align Workforce Programs & Connect Employers to Resources, Expand Access to Public Health Resources, Invest in Civic Infrastructure & Prioritize Connectedness, Expand Public Transportation Options
<p>The Regional Workforce Development component project will create navigator positions, part of a local Regional Navigator Network composed of 12 types of positions and hosted by different regional organizations within the Regional Workforce Development, Public Health, Transportation, and Main Street Skowhegan Revitalization component projects, to help connect employers to workforce resources and connect individuals to basic resources, employment, and other career opportunities. The project will include Workforce Navigators, a Community Engagement Specialist, a Community Coordinator for Apprenticeships, and Adult Education Career Navigators housed at various local organizations, including Chambers of Commerce, adult education centers, and local apprenticeship intermediaries. The project will lean on the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce's established Workforce Practitioners, a group that will expand to include stakeholders from the Skowhegan area, to guide in navigating regional workforce struggles.</p>	

Public Health	
Lead: Somerset Public Health/Redington-Fairview General Hospital	Requested: \$4.4 million
Related Projects: WaterWorks Innovation Hub, Dirigo Launch, Commercial Kitchen Incubator, MSS Revitalization Admin, Civic Infrastructure, Public Health, Transportation	Associated Strategies: Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Prioritize Employee Job Readiness, Align Workforce Programs & Connect Employers to Resources, Expand Access to Public Health Resources, Invest in Civic Infrastructure & Prioritize Connectedness, Expand Public Transportation Options
<p>The Public Health Component Project will focus on addressing data-indicated social barriers contributing to the Prime Age Employment Gap in the targeted service area. These include substance use, lack of social and community connection, lack of skills due to generational poverty, and difficulties in navigating community-based resources that support basic needs. SPH will serve as the administrative and programmatic leadership for this component and will also lead efforts to create Recovery Friendly Workplaces that support employment by people in recovery from substance use and with past criminal histories. SPH will collaborate with its primary sub awardee, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP), which will provide services using a whole family approach that includes resource navigation and promotes community connections with the goal of reducing social isolation and promoting engagement in the workforce.</p>	

Regional Transportation	
Lead: Kennebec Valley Council of Governments	Requested: \$4.4 million
Related Projects: WaterWorks Innovation Hub, Dirigo Launch, Commercial Kitchen Incubator, MSS Revitalization Admin, Civic Infrastructure, Public Health, Transportation	Associated Strategies: Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Prioritize Employee Job Readiness, Align Workforce Programs & Connect Employers to Resources, Expand Access to Public Health Resources, Invest in Civic Infrastructure & Prioritize Connectedness, Expand Public Transportation Options
<p>This regional transportation project will allow the lead organization, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments</p>	

(KVCOG), to purchase transportation software and hire a transportation planner to assess data and conduct a thorough needs assessment that will guide future regional planning efforts. In partnership, KVCOG and Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP), the public transportation provider, will design a regional transportation program that meets the needs of individuals seeking to obtain and maintain employment that would be unavailable to them without reliable transportation services. This program will also be open to the public to ensure the entire community benefits from safe, reliable, and affordable transportation.

Complementary & Community-Based Approach: All component projects under The Revitalization of Central Maine Recompete Plan are aligned, complementary, and derived from data, community assessments, employer needs, and asset-based strategies. Please see Related Projects and Associated Strategies sections within each project description for more detailed information about alignment.

Sustainable Partnerships & Community Commitments: Several years ago, the Central Maine Growth Council developed a regional hub-and-spoke innovation model, in collaboration with Main Street Skowhegan, local academic institutions, the Small Business Development Center, and other economic development and philanthropic partners. This model laid the foundation for several projects and initiatives in recent years, strengthening regional collaboration.

Over the last few months, coalition lead partners Main Street Skowhegan and the Central Maine Growth Council conducted more than 50 meetings with 274 stakeholders, including resource agencies, organizations, municipal representatives, state commissioners, and national nonprofits, and we’ve grown our coalition and support network to include more than 50 partners.

Partners and Coalition Members

Augusta Electrical JATC AWEN Bricks Coworking Center on Rural Innovation Central Maine Growth Council Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board City of Waterville Colby College Congressman Golden Empowering Work Advisors Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Gifford's Governor Mills JMG / Aspire River Hawks JPM, LLC Kennebec Valley Community Action Program Kennebec Valley Community College Kennebec Valley Council of Governments	Main Street America Main Street Skowhegan Maine Department of Economic and Community Development Maine Department of Labor Maine Grain Alliance Maine Grains Maine Outdoor Brands Maine Technology Institute Mid Maine Regional Adult Community Education Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce Mid-Maine Tech Center MSAD 54 Adult and Community Education New Balance Northern Light Inland Hospital Redington-Fairview General Hospital Reimagining the Civic Commons Roux Institute	Sappi Senator Collins Senator King Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation Skowhegan Public Library Skowhegan Regional Chamber of Commerce Skowhegan Savings Bank Small Business Development Center Somerset Career & Tech Center Somerset Economic Development Corporation Somerset Public Health The Good Crust Thomas College Town of Fairfield Town of Skowhegan University of Maine at Farmington
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Commitments that Leverage EDA Funding

Central Maine Growth Council commits a total of \$1,864,000 in project matching	JMG/Aspire River Hawks commits to planning and executing three (3)	JPM, LLC commits to \$2,000,000 towards the redevelopment of 48
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funds and rural small business/entrepreneur support in the form of coworking memberships towards 80 companies over 2-5 years.	community dinners annually to promote and connect students and their families with workforce training opportunities over 5 years.	Water St, Skowhegan to create 5 affordable/workforce housing units over 3 years.
Main Street Skowhegan commits to \$1,259,000 of matching funds for the Commercial Kitchen Incubator and Civic Infrastructure, will add 5-6 new jobs, will serve as the coalition lead for the duration of the grant and beyond, will employ the Recompete Plan Coordinator, coordinate coalition meetings and deploy governance plan, assist with TA and oversight of all navigators in partnership with project leads, become certified as a Recovery Friendly Workplace over 5 years.	Skowhegan Public Library commits to providing space at the library for Navigators to meet with individuals or for Resource Navigators to provide community engagement programming, and will continue to provide and collaborate on programming that brings our residents together to combat isolation and loneliness within the community and promotes community engagement over 5 years.	Roux Institute commits to co-hosting an annual Start Summit (an idea hackathon that introduces participants to entrepreneurial principles and frameworks and uses group work to help teams develop business ideas and practice the art of entrepreneurship) in Skowhegan, ME that will serve as an entry point to an existing entrepreneurial pathway in the area and further support Main Street Skowhegan's existing entrepreneurial programs over 5 years.
Maine Technology Institute commits \$5,000,000 towards supporting high-potential startups, early stage companies, and innovative initiatives over 5 years.	Sappi will work with SCTC to create additional maintenance craft pre-apprenticeship programs and will hire 10 high school graduates from SCTC & Sappi Electrical & Instrumentation Pre-Apprenticeship over 5 years.	Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation commits to providing a \$100,000, 90 day, interest-free line of credit to Main Street Skowhegan for additional cash flow for Recompete related projects and initiatives over 5 years.
Maine Grains commits to adding 17-20 additional jobs over 5 years.	The Maine Grain Alliance commits to utilizing the Community Kitchen Incubator and host one workshop, panel, lecture, or demonstration per quarter for up to 100 entrepreneurs each, over 5 years.	Maine Small Business Development Center commits to providing business advising and education to entrepreneurs utilizing the commercial kitchen incubator.

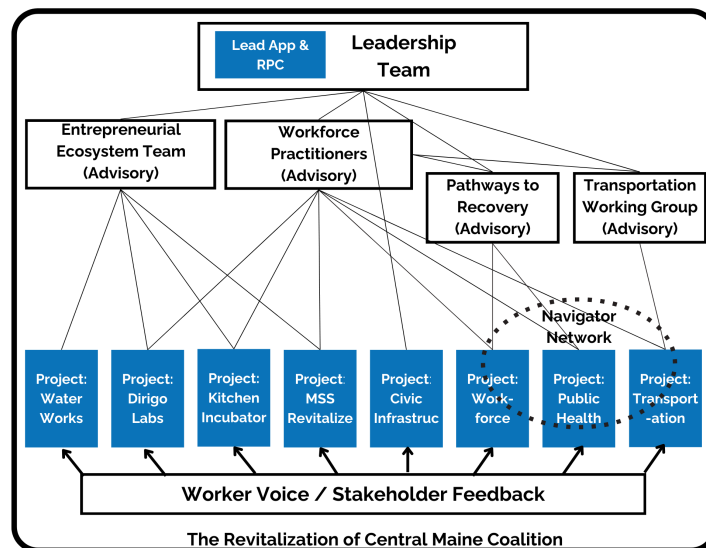
If awarded Phase 2 funding, we're poised for Recompete Plan Implementation, building on the foundational success of our hub-and-spoke model and tapping into the strengths of new partners who bring expertise and new commitments.

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Our governance model will consist of a combination of previously formed advisory groups—Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Team, Workforce Practitioners, and Pathways to Recovery—a new leadership team, the new Regional Navigator Network, and Transportation Working Group. We expect that we'll add other coalition members and groups over time as projects and initiatives morph and grow.

The Leadership Team will make consensus decisions for the coalition and will be made up of the Lead Applicant organization, Main Street Skowhegan, which has convened various local stakeholders to create the Revitalization of Central Maine Coalition; the Recompete Plan Coordinator; project leads; and individuals who can offer expertise in project/group areas while also being representative of a diverse range of community stakeholders, organizations, and businesses.

Each Workforce Practitioners meeting will include a Navigator Network update presented by the 12 different types of roles within the Navigator Network, overseen by Somerset Public Health, and working closely with the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce.



- RISK MITIGATION:**
1. Enhance employee management by implementing clear communication channels, providing training and development opportunities, and establishing conflict resolution processes to promptly address disputes and concerns.
 2. In timeline management, create a detailed project timeline with milestones and deadlines, monitor progress regularly, and include contingency time buffers to manage unexpected delays.
 3. For construction management, engage experienced contractors, conduct regular site inspections, and maintain open communication with all stakeholders to proactively address potential issues.
 4. Develop a comprehensive risk management plan, perform regular risk assessments, and establish a dedicated team to manage and mitigate project risks, ensuring preparedness for any challenges that may arise during the project.

EQUITY & ENVIRONMENT: The service area for this proposal is within an EDA deemed distressed rural area of Somerset County (Skowhegan and Fairfield) and Kennebec County (Waterville) that have high rates of poverty/people with disabilities and low education attainment rates. Ensuring equity in providing access to basic needs and employment will be accomplished with a multifaceted approach that addresses systemic barriers, promotes inclusive policies and practices, and prioritizes investments in underserved communities. The Coalition will follow an iterative process of collecting feedback from the communities it serves while providing services to determine how to improve its equitable distribution and promote inclusion in decision making. Key socio-demographics that are overrepresented in the prime age employment gap will be targeted to determine how to best serve marginalized communities and provide services that will improve sustained connection to employment. Access to quality education, skill development programs, and social connections is essential for ensuring equitable opportunities for aspirational employment. Our proposal invests in initiatives that reach underserved communities, provides skill development and mentorship programs that can help connect members of the PAEG to their community, and empowers individuals with job-readiness skills needed to access employment opportunities.

GOALS & REGIONAL IMPACT: Outcomes and impacts include:

>>Construction Project Impacts (WaterWorks & Civic Infrastructure): The total one-time economic impact generated by the projects combined, The Kitchen at 185, the Skowhegan Riverfront Development & River Park, Dirigo Labs, and the Head of Falls Development will be 465 jobs, \$21.7 million in earnings, and over \$53.8 million in sales throughout the local economy.

>>Accelerator and Incubator Operations Impacts: The ongoing operations of the Projects will generate a combined 138 jobs, \$7.2 million in earnings, and \$21.5 million in sales throughout the local economy annually. Note that new visitors to the Skowhegan Riverfront will generate additional economic impacts not captured in this analysis, which will be evaluated later in the work.

>>Dirigo Labs Impacts: By Year 5, the initiative aims to provide TA services to 330 businesses and startups, resulting in a 25% increase in sales and a 50% success rate, with 99 companies benefiting; additionally, the project expects to support the launch of 149 new products through its accelerator and mentor network, culminating in \$25 million in business sales and significant regional economic impacts including \$14.1 million in sales and the creation of 60 jobs. The project also plans to cultivate an active 250-mentor network, host 5 pitch competitions, secure \$15 million in funding across various cohorts, and ensure that a minimum of 75% of labor, materials, and services are sourced from Maine-based vendors, ultimately stimulating over \$60 million in downtown redevelopment investments.

>>Commercial Kitchen Incubator Impacts: Support 20 emerging and established entrepreneurs, aiming to grow to 35-40 businesses by Year 5, and launch incubator and community programs to graduate 3-5 businesses annually and attract 5,000 participants to food events, with goals of increasing private investment, job creation, and sales. Introduce a co-packing service to process 30,000 pounds of local surplus produce and develop a workforce training program for 25-50 individuals.

>>Workforce Development Impacts: Navigators assisted 750 employers; Community Coordinator for Apprenticeships worked with 40 businesses and 100 apprentices/pre-apprentices; and Adult Ed Career Navigators met with 2,000 clients.

>>Public Health Impacts: Fifty businesses certified as Recovery Friendly Workplaces; 665 families supported through whole family coaching; 1,870 people supported by Resource Navigators; community engagement and neighborhood events serving 5,750 annually, totaling 28,750 over the grant period.

>>MSS Revitalization: Serve 10,000 unique participants, coordinate 35 employer wellness programs, and serve 60 career pathway participants.

>>Transportation Impacts: At the end of the grant period, develop a reliable and consistent public transportation system that will get residents to and from jobs, appointments, and extracurriculars.

PHASE 1 >> PHASE 2 PROGRESS: As noted above, over the last few months, we've conducted more than 50 meetings with 274 stakeholders. Over the summer, the RPC will begin implementation projects, working with the chambers and resource providers to help connect businesses to workforce services, including apprenticeship programs.